



THE EMPIRE STATE GRANGER

American Values, Hometown Roots

Our Vision!

- Initiator of Community Action
- Facilitator of Leadership Development
- Advocate for Families
- Trusted Conveyor of Issues to Legislators

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President's Column

Sandra Green



Why should I attend a Leaders Conference? Or, a Regional Leaders Meeting? Or, Legislative Day? Or, the FAC/Lecturers Day? Or, the local Pomona meeting? Or, the Grange meeting? I am sure there are those reading this who have asked these or similar questions. I am hoping you will continue to read, and I will be able to convince you of the importance of these questions and the right answer to them.

Most leaders will admit to having attended at least one of the above where they left asking questions of that type. However, I believe those experiences are few. There is rarely any Conference or meeting or day of learning which does not contain at least one redeeming aspect. Most of the above-mentioned events leave the attendee feeling motivated and better prepared to handle challenges.

If you are one of those who often opts out of attending such activities merely because you just don't want to put in the effort to get there, I would encourage you to put forth the effort. If you have been asked by someone to ride along with them, say, "Yes." Maybe you could offer a ride to another member who doesn't usually go. If you attend with an open mind, or even one that is slightly ajar, I think you will bring back with you a nugget of wisdom.

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While the conferences and state-wide events are important and need Grange members to be involved, in many ways the local meetings are much more important.

When Grange members stop attending the local meetings, the local Grange becomes endangered. Granges that have well attended meetings and activities do not close - die slowly. One or two members don't show up. Then, another one or two stay away. The ones who do attend meetings try to make decisions to keep the Grange active. The non-attending members stop helping with the activities. The members who have tried to carry the weight of meetings and activities grow weary from all the responsibility. They want to keep the Grange going but lack the energy to do it all by themselves. Their enthusiasm for Grange shrivels. They enjoyed interacting with their fellow members, but now there are few local members left. What's the point? We may as well close.

I doubt there are many of the "why bother to go" group still reading this, if they even began reading it. They would likely say, "The Grange won't close because I don't attend meetings. They can handle the activities without me. I'm just one person; it won't make a difference."

One more member being involved can save some struggling Granges. For those regularly attending members, seeing another member come to the meeting can give them the spark they need to continue trying. Having one more member show up to Grange sponsored activities can be reaffirming for the members working to make those events happen.

If you are physically able to attend meetings/events, please make an effort to get there. See if someone will ride with you or let you ride with them. Can't get there? Meetings can be attended virtually. Think meetings are boring? Go and give your opinions on how to make the meetings better. Those regular attendees would love to know how to get more members to come. Knowing others care about keeping the Grange going can make all the difference.

Make the effort to be involved and you will find a lot of wonderful rewards!

Marcellus Grange FFA Program

It's a Party! Living to Serve

By Bobbie Severson, Marcellus Grange

Shared values are key to successful partnerships. This is particularly true as FFA members are "living to serve" coupled with the Grange's mission to engage in service projects to strengthen local communities. Of particular note is local effort to support the statewide community service initiative to strengthen relationships between the NYS Grange and FFA through NYS FFA's yearlong 100th anniversary celebration.

Marcellus Grange is dedicated to building relationships with Marcellus Central School District FFA students and faculty. Community Service committee co-chair, Bobbie Severson contacted Caitlin Eaton, MCS Middle School teacher and FFA advisor to explore a joint project to create 50 FFA birthday cake kits for distribution through local food pantries. Costs to celebrate birthdays can be particularly cumbersome, especially to food pantry customers. Birthday cake kits raised awareness of the Grange and MCS FFA. Cake kits extended the NYS FFA centennial celebration throughout the community!



Valorie Woolley with Cake Kits

Ms. Eaton saw the project as a means for students to demonstrate the FFA motto "living to serve". She secured funding to purchase project materials. Boxed cake mix, canned frosting, soda, birthday candles, and party favors were placed in an aluminum pan. Colorful ribbon was used to tie the plastic top onto an aluminum cake pan to secure the kit ingredients inside. Each kit included a birthday card and notation of the collaboration between the Grange and MCS FFA. Four Grange members met twice with 6th, and 7th & 8th graders in November. Members were particularly helpful to student teams when attaching covers to the pans. Once the kits were completed, Ms. Eaton delivered them to area food pantries.



FFA Members

Collaboration did not stop with the construction of cake kits. At the January 2026 Grange meeting, eleven MCS middle school students and Ms. Eaton joined members for pizza and wings.



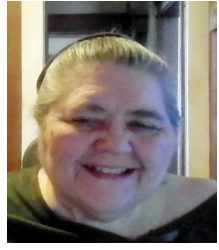
FFA Model Meeting

FFA members provided an update on projects and pending sub-district contest preparations. They conducted a model FFA meeting called to order with a gavel provided by the Grange. Members noted the similarities between Grange and FFA symbols as did FFA members when they viewed the Grange degree symbols.

"We look forward to further opportunities mutually beneficial to both MCS FFA and the Grange that lead to strengthening both organizations in the future along with the community in which we reside."

Make a connection with your local FFA Chapter

Legislative State Grange Column Secretary



Cindy Benson-Pollard



Ryan Orton

Spring is finally here after a long snowy winter. I think we can say that most of us are tired of shoveling snow and the being cold. Now is the time to welcome the flowers of spring and the much warmer weather. I hope your Grange has special plans for Grange Month in April. This is an excellent opportunity to share with your community what the Grange has been doing to make it a nicer place to live for everyone. I want to take this part of my article to once again thank all of you who participated in our email blast to advocate for the passage of the bill for the Multi Early Cancer Detection test to be covered by Medicare. I sent out an email to those of you on the list that this piece of legislation was signed into law by the President in February. We have worked tirelessly for the last two years to have this legislation passed and signed. We finally did it. It just proves what I have said always that working together we can make changes.

Have you received our email blasts about legislative issues? If not, I encourage you to go our website at nysgrange.org and sign up to receive them. As you can see, it does work. It is an excellent way to be a part of the legislative work of the Grange. The State Legislature is busy at work for this new session. Did you have a chance to investigate the Governor's State of the State Address. She is advocating strongly for issues that are important to our rural communities, especially in the agricultural sector. The Senate and Assembly are already starting to work on budget bills. By the time that you receive this issue, I am hopeful that we will have a budget in place. If not, I encourage you to contact your state representatives and urge them to pass a budget that is equitable for everyone. Currently, some of the issues that we are working on include to include urban farming projects in agriculture districts, legal absences for students attending FFA, 4-H and Grange activities, expansion of telehealth services. How are you doing working on resolutions for this year's State Grange. As for this article, I have received only one. If you need help, please reach out. I am always happy to help in any way I can. If it is helping with your research or help with writing your resolution, I will be glad to help.

At the recent 159th Annual National Grange Convention "at sea," a dues increase was approved starting in March 2026. As a result, the New York State Grange is increasing our dues with the following new schedule:

- Individual & Affiliate Memberships:
\$8.50 per quarter or \$34 per year
(An increase of \$1.50 per quarter or \$6 per year)
- Family Memberships:
\$20.00 per quarter or \$80 per year
(An increase of \$3 per quarter or \$12 per year)

We realize that dues increases are not a wanted thing. However, if National Grange raises their dues, we at the State Grange need to do the same to remain solvent. This may also require a dues increase for your Subordinate Grange, and that some of you may have already begun collecting 2026 dues.

Updated Quarterly Report Forms have been sent to each Grange that paid their December 2025 dues. Please make sure your math is correct – do as your math teachers told you in school and double check your work! Some Granges started paying the new dues amount in December; there is a credit on your account and a note on your receipt enclosed with your March Quarterly Report stating this. There's no need to pay more earlier if you don't have to! For those few Granges that use the Electronic Quarterly Report Forms, the updated forms were e-mailed to the person who submits the Quarterly Reports for your Grange. Please discard any Quarterly Reports that have the old dues amounts at the bottom of the form!

As always, if anyone has any questions regarding the dues increase, please ask! Congratulations to the following Granges for securing new members since our last writing:

- 1 Member:
Stanford Grange #808 (Dutchess County)
Rhinebeck Grange #896 (Dutchess County)
Ausable Valley Grange #973 (Essex/Clinton County)
Westville Grange #540 (Otsego County)

- Pierstown Grange #793 (Otsego County)
2 New Members:
Kendrew Grange #891 (St. Lawrence County)
3 New Members:
Copake Grange #935 (Columbia County)
Cuyler Grange #449 (Cortland County)
Walton Grange #1454 (Delaware County)
6 New Members:
Butternut Valley Grange #1533 (Otsego County)

Chaplain's Corner



Kelly Frost

In place of the Chaplain's column, I am substituting this remembrance.

This is the installation charge of the Chaplain.

Sister, upon you devolves a labor that I trust will ever be a pleasant and cheerful task. In presenting you with this sacred volume, the textbook to which all look for wisdom and instruction, I need not urge you to be faithful in your calling. As the Chaplain of this Grange in your prayers to the Master of the Great Grange above, may you never labor in vain. May the spiritual seed you shall sow fall on good soil and bring forth an hundredfold. Cast thy bread upon the waters and thou shalt gather it after many days. Remember the parable of the mustard seed.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

³¹ He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. ³² Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."

³⁴ Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. ³⁵ So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet:

"I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world."³¹

Museum Notice

The NYS Grange Museum Board would like to announce they will be open to Grangers and the public during the upcoming Northeast Lecturers Conference April 17th through the 19th. We will be open on Friday from 2pm until 5pm, Saturday 10:30am to 5pm and Sunday 10:30am to 2pm. Please come in and join us in celebrating this event. We look forward to seeing you there.





New York State Grange Merchandise Store

NYS Grange now has its own store to provide items for ALL Grangers.

- Items in the store can be customized for you and your Grange.
- There is no minimum order
- Items are shipped directly to your home
- Your purchases help support NYS Grange
- Extended and Tall sizes available









Visit the store at: <https://1800tshirts.chippily.com/NewYorkStateGrange/>



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Community Involvement



Melvin Phelps and Joan Phelps

Wow – what a stretch of cold weather we have had! It was cold with snow and high winds. Then it would it would warn up and melt the snow. Then it would turn around and do the same thing all over again. What a mad cycle! But – I have to say I welcome this time. It is a time to cook some comfort food, read a good book, do some knitting and work on my families history.

Has your Grange begun to work on a “New Community Service Project” for this year? The explanation and guidelines for this new project are in the handbook. I am excited to see just what new project ideas are being planned across New York State. Have fun with this project and if it turns out to be to your liking, continue with it.

The United States of America is celebrating its 250th Birthday this year. There are many events being planned across the Nation all year to celebrate this milestone Birthday. My Town of Alabama is celebrating it Bicentennial this year and has also planned many days of celebration alongside the Nations Birthday. What about your Grange Town? Are there celebrations being planned that your Grange could be a part of and/or support? The Grange History is very important to our Nation and our Towns. This would be a good time to share the History with others. Possibly your Grange could offer assistance in one of the 250th Birthday celebrations being held in your area. This would be a good Community Service Involvement.

I hope that by now the cold is behind us and we can begin to enjoy the signs of spring. Spring has always been a time of “new” beginnings. So ---- let’s have some new beginnings and start with a “New Community Service Project”. What do you say?

Happy Spring! Kite flying days are ahead!! (hey – that might be a fun community day! Get some kites and gather some friends and grangers and go fly some kites)

(just a side-note --- did you know that Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman were Grange members? Dwight D. Eisenhower dedicated the National Grange headquarters in Washington D.C. in 1960? Eleanor Roosevelt was a member of the Grange? Andrew Johnson commissioned the Grange Founder, Oliver Kelley, to tour the South? Henry Groseclose – who founded the Future Farmers of America was a Grange member? Did you know this? Just thought you would like to know – that’s Grange History.

Leadership Membership

Thomas Lawton

Shaping the Image of Your Grange: Why a Plan Matters

Every Grange already has an image in its community. The question is not whether your Grange is known, but what it is known for.

Some Granges are seen as welcoming gathering places. Others are known mainly for fundraisers or hall rentals. Some are respected but distant. Others are remembered only as a building that is rarely open. These impressions develop through habits, visibility, and choices.

Strong and growing Granges intentionally decide what they want their community to know about them and then plan their work to support that identity.

Why Image Matters

Community image is not about logos or slogans. It is about trust, recognition, and relevance. People join organizations they understand. People support organizations they recognize.

People protect organizations they feel connected to. When community members can easily answer the question, “What does that Grange do?”, a major barrier to engagement is removed.

Decide Who You Want to Be Known As

Before planning events or outreach, a Grange should pause and ask a few simple questions. What do we want people to say about us? What role do we want to play in our community? Who do we want to feel welcome here? What values do we want to be known for? Clear answers provide direction.

Examples might include being known as a family friendly

Grange, a service oriented Grange, a place that connects generations, or a Grange that honors tradition while welcoming new ideas.

Align Actions with Identity

Once the desired image is clear, planning becomes easier. Every activity should support that identity. Welcoming Granges greet newcomers. Family focused Granges plan accessible events. Traditions should be clearly connected to purpose.

Be Consistent and Visible

Community image is built through consistency. Regular public events, visible service projects, clear communication, and familiar faces help people understand who you are.

Review and Adjust

Communities change, and Granges must adapt. Reviewing your image plan periodically is a sign of good leadership.

Intentional Identity Builds Stronger Granges

A Grange that knows who it is and communicates that clearly becomes easier to support and easier to join. Planning your Grange’s image is about being intentional about the best of who you already are and making sure your community knows it.

New Officers and Deputy Biographies

We are beginning a series of introductions of Officers and Deputies. Here is the first installment.



Hello, my name is John Hornor and I am a New York State Grange Special Deputy. I started my Grange membership as a member of Baldwinsville Junior Grange, then joined Elbridge Grange upon graduation from Junior Grange. Eventually I switched my membership to Lamson Grange so I could belong to the same Grange as my grandparents. Currently, I am the Master/President of Lamson Grange #588 in Onondaga County. I am the Treasurer and Communications director of Onondaga Pomona Grange #12. My favorite parts

of being a Grange member is that Grange is something that the whole family can enjoy together, the friendships that I have made, and the connection to my community. As a Special Deputy, I am committed to helping to ensure that the Grange remains strong and active for future generations. On a personal note, I have worked in the printing business for 45 years, the last 20 years as a manager in the mailing department of a printing business. I have a deep interest in history and genealogy. I have also served as Treasurer and President of a local cemetery association. To contact me, please call/text (315)956-1827 (after 6:00 PM weekdays or anytime on the weekends) or email at jghorner@hotmail.com.

Allan Mallette

SPECIAL DEPUTY STATE MASTER

This is my second stint as a NYSG Deputy. Under Bruce Croucher I was a Deputy for 7 years. After my first year, I was elected as President of the Deputy Association.

I am Master of Newark Grange #366 and a member of Wayne County Pomona Grange. I am a Past Master of Horseheads Grange, where I joined, as well as Past Master of Wayne County Pomona Grange. I have been a delegate to State Grange several times as well as a Delegate-at-Large. I served as a gate Deputy when National Grange met in Rochester and I was Chairman of the Transportation Committee when National Grange met in Niagara Falls.

I joined Horseheads Grange in 1978. I took a demit and joined Newark Grange in 1982. One of my favorite things about the Grange is the friendships made. When I moved to Newark, it was the Grange members that helped me get involved in Newark Grange and Wayne County Pomona Grange. I also feel that what you put into Grange, you get out of Grange. I have put a lot of effort in the Grange and feel I have gotten a lot out of it.

I graduated with an AAS in Business Administration. I then served 4 years in the Air Force as a security guard and law enforcement officer; one of my security activities was presidential support for President Nixon at Andrews Air Force Base. After being honorably discharge, I went to Elmira College with a BA degree in Business Administration/Economics. I worked over 40 years as an accountant, retiring From G.W. Lisk Company, Inc. in 2014 after 33 years. I also run my own income tax and accounting business, preparing over 700 tax returns per year.

I wanted to be a Special Deputy because I enjoy working with other Granges, especially the ritual. I enjoy being associated with Grange members, so when I

(Continued on page 8)

Lecturer



Brenda Noble

I hope we will see many of our New York Grangers at Grange Headquarters in Cortland, NY for the Northeast Lecturers Association Conference! It will be held April 17-19, 2026. Please see further details also in this Empire Granger Issue. Registration and payment is due by April 10, 2026. Make hotel reservations by April 1, 2026 with the Quality Inn in Cortland to receive the conference rate of \$110 per night – mention “Grange Conference.” Registration forms were sent to Family Activities and Lecturers of each Grange, and can be found on the New York State Grange website.

The following weekend will be our Family Activities and Lecturers Conference weekend for New York. All Art and Photo entries are due to Grange Headquarters in Cortland by April 20, 2026. Judging of the entries will be Friday April 24, 2026. On Saturday April 25, 2026 – EVERYONE is invited to come for our conference day with speakers, talent and speaking contests, and fellowship! Please call Grange Headquarters with reservations for lunch \$15 – 607-756-7553. The day starts with coffee and donuts at 9 am and Welcome at 9:30 am.

Please let me know if you have any questions!

State Grange Historian



Carol Bailey

DID YOU KNOW...

That America is celebrating its semi quincentennial? That is 250 years for our good old US of A. This year’s celebrations seem to be smaller and less grand than 1976.

In 1976 New York State Grange celebrated the bicen-

Northeast Lecturers Association Conference 2026

America 250: Honoring Our Past, Shaping Our Future

The Northeast Lecturers Association (NELA) invites you to join us for our 2026 NELA Conference, to be held April 17–19, 2026, at the New York State Grange Headquarters in Cortland, New York.

With the nation approaching its 250th anniversary, this year’s conference theme—America 250—will explore how Grange education, community engagement, and shared history continue to shape our local, regional, and national story. The conference will feature workshops, discussions, and fellowship designed to inspire and equip participants for the years ahead.

This event is open to everyone – not just Lecturers. Members, friends, and anyone interested in Grange education and programming are warmly encouraged to attend. Our event begins at 7:00 PM on Friday, April 17, and concludes by 11:00 AM on Sunday, April 19.

Affordable and Flexible Registration

- **Conference Registration:** \$20 per attendee
- **Saturday Lunch:** Soups and sandwiches – \$15
- **Celebration Dinner:** Turkey buffet – \$25

Attendees may pay for events **individually**, or **save \$5** by registering for **all three** for a total of **just \$55**.

Whether you attend for one meal, one day, or the entire weekend, the 2026 NELA Conference offers a meaningful and affordable opportunity to learn, connect, and celebrate.

Conference attendees will be staying at the Quality Inn Cortland, located at 188 Clinton Avenue, Cortland, NY, conveniently next door to New York State Grange headquarters. To reserve your room for Friday and Saturday nights (April 17 and 18, checking out April 19), call 607-756-5622 and be sure to mention “Grange Conference.” Reservations must be made by April 1 to receive the reduced nightly room rate of \$110 plus tax, which includes a complimentary full breakfast both mornings.

We hope you’ll join us in Cortland this April as we reflect on America’s past—and look ahead to the next 250 years. Registration and payment are due by April 10, 2026 to Dave Roberts, NELA Treasurer. Registration forms were sent to Family Activities and Lecturers in each Grange, and is posted on the New York State Grange website. If you have any questions, please contact Brenda Noble, NY Lecturer.

ennial in grand style. There was a committee of fifteen plus June Sherow as chair. They were appointed by Master Robert Drake and reappointed by Master Wendell Chamberlain.

The committee provided numerous activities for the year and here are some of them. Lecturer’s programs were provided for the year. Five drill teams were formed who performed around the state and at the annual session. The committee suggested the theme for the handbook “Grange Salutes America.”

A walk-a-thon in the nine counties covered by the Sullivan Trail. A bus tour of three days covered historic sites with evening entertainment.

Ring of bells on July 4 at 2 p.m. in every community was promoted. Culminating the year was a fashion show from 1776 to the present during the banquet. The lecturer’s program on Sunday night was a cantata “I Love America” With organ and piano music and several soloists, the cantata was enthusiastically received. There were additional musical numbers also. **AND NOW FOR 2026...**

So fifty years later what are we as Grangers going to do to celebrate? I am part of a committee to formulate some plans. The

committee met at state session and brainstormed. Ideas ranged from discussions of food to music. Discussion topics were various changes from 1776 to 2026, Declaration of Independence, importance of strategic battle sites in NY, counties name for Revolutionary War generals and any related topic of your choosing.

Grange has always been known for its food. A comparison of foods from that era with today’s food. Maybe have a cooking demonstration of an early food. Apple butter for instance. Have a dinner with colonial foods or popular foods from different eras.

Work with your community if there is a celebration or take the lead in organizing one.

The committee also is sponsoring a flag photo contest. Information and rules are elsewhere in this issue.

There may be more ideas coming in a future issue. I know from reading various sources and talking with historians, the 2026 celebrations to be less extravagant than in 1976. Washington, Philadelphia and New York will have their fireworks and other events. Rural New York and Granges too can find multiple ways to celebrate this event.

Sports



Co-Directors
Bruce Dehner & Matt Horton

Well everyone think spring. Hope everyone is working on getting your teams set up for our sports events. We had a very good year last year and I would like a better one this year. Here are the dates dartball April 26th at state headquarters, bowling June 7th at Cort Lanes Cortland, NY. Golf will be held July 12, 2026 at Vassar golf course in Poughkeepsie, NY and corn hole is August 1st at state headquarters. Contact either Matt or myself to sign up for any event.



Museum Thank You

NEW YORK STATE MUSEUM BOARD

We wish to extend a thank you to everyone who presented H-bills to support the NYS Grange Museum in 2025.

This monetary donation was presented at the annual session of the New York State Grange.

Your generosity has helped to maintain the work of the Museum.

We will again welcome your donations of

H-bills in

Now is the time!

Across the country states are achieving a net gain in membership. Many have made this goal repeatedly in the last few years. New York State is within easy reach of a net gain in membership it will only take each Grange in the state to gain one new member.

Does your Junior Grange have what it takes to be a Distinguished Junior Grange? After looking at the application that can be found on the National Grange website, I know that some of the Junior Granges in New York would meet the criteria for being a Distinguished Junior Grange. Junior Grange leaders, please take a look at the application for Distinguished Junior Grange and work with your Junior Grange to help your members earn this prestigious award. What an honor it would be to bring this award home from National Grange! If you have any questions about the application, please reach out to me for help. If you need help with any of the criteria, I am also willing to help your Junior Grange do what they need to do to qualify for the Distinguished Junior Grange award. Let's get New York on the map with a Distinguished Junior Grange!



JUNIOR GRANGE

Are your Junior Grange members working on entries for the New York State Grange Lecturer's and Family Activities contests? These contests are open to all Junior Grange and 1+ members. The writing contest has two categories: Write an essay of no more than 500 words about "What will grow in my garden" or write a newspaper article about a Grange event that you have had or planning. The art contest for Junior Grange members is to create a structure or art out of Legos. The Photography contest is: Category A – Farmers At Work and Category B – Snowy Day. Please view the Lecturer's handbook on the New York State Grange website for more details. Take time to view the Family Activities handbook for information about their contests as well. It is always a joy to see the Junior Grange members participate in these contests! Do you have pictures of events or activities that your Junior Grange has participated in? If so, please send them to me and I will see that they are put onto the New York State Grange website. This way, when people visit our website, they can see how active the Junior Grangers are in New York.

The 2026 Big E craft for Junior Grangers is a Painted Bird House. Make from scratch or purchase a pre-built birdhouse, no larger than 8" length x 8" width x 12" high. Paint or decorate the birdhouse using any medium and/or embellishments. Be creative! More information about the New York level judging will be coming out soon.

song workshops, bowling and lots of fellowship. I hope you will join us and see what a wonderful group of youth we have here in NYS. A tentative schedule and the registration forms can be found on our Facebook page and the State Grange website.

We are excited to announce that one of our newer youth members, Logan Gonzalez, has joined our team. Logan is from Ravena, NY and he has been running our Discord channel where the youth members have been staying in touch with each other between events. Please let us know if you have any youth that would like to join in. We look forward to working with Logan and value his input as a younger Grange member. Alyvia needed to step back from our team due to her busy schedule. We will miss working with her but we thank her for all of her hard work and great ideas for our program.

At State Grange in October we introduced some new programs for the Youth Department that we are very excited about. Our first new program will be the Sharon Croucher Legislative Experience. Sharon was such a big supporter of this State Grange Youth Department, and it is an honor to name this program after her. Many of you are familiar with the John Trimble Experience at the National Grange. This

Family Activities

Lena Goettel Linda Pile
Co-Directors

Hopefully everyone spent the cold snowy winter making crafts for our craft contests. As you prepare for your contest, both Subordinate and Pomona, keep in mind you have one entry per category. However, you can enter as many categories as you wish. Entries should be free from stains and marked clearly by completing the entry form with the class, your name, address, phone number, Grange name and number. Indicate if you are a Grange member or non-member. Please have this information securely pinned with a safety pin or tape on the back of your craft. We want everyone to use your imagination and recycled calendars to create a unique craft. There are no rules and no measurements for this class. Let's see what you can do by recycling and being creative. Categories for the contests are: 1. Woodworking not to exceed 20x24. 2. Quilting table runner maximum size 36x30. A. Machine B. Hand C. Junior 3. Bed size quilted A. Machine B. Hand C. Junior 4. Needlework A. afghans; knitted crocheted or woven min with 45" by 60"

length 60" by 75" B. baby size max 35"x40" C. Doilies knitted, crochet, or tatted max size 20"x20" 5. Latch hook must be finished with rug binding. 6. 3-piece Baby set (yarn suitable for baby) 7. Embroidery cross stitch 8. Stuffed toy should be child safe 9. holiday ornament max size 6"x6" 8. Mason jar pint size Be creative! Items for the state contest should be mailed or brought to our Grange headquarters in Cortland by April 15th. Judging will take place on Friday April 24th. Our committee is looking forward to presenting your crafts to the judges. We appreciate your skills, dedication and the numerous hours you have put into completing your crafts. Our committee welcomes all your ideas. The new handbook will be developed later this year and we will go over ideas that have been presented to us for 2027-2028. Our health topic for 2026 will be on bullying. We will have information covering bullying in school, cyber, workplace, as well as the physical and emotional effects. This will be on display at our April conference. We hope you attend our April 25th conference in Cortland. Please consider making items for donations to the Big E. We would like to beat our record of last year of over 800 items donated. I would like to thank Maryanne Campbell for her dedication to the FAC and for all her help. Please welcome Linda Pile to the FAC as co-chair.

gives a youth member the opportunity to participate at the National Session just like a delegate, but with no vote. They can attend committee meetings and have a seat on the floor. It is a wonderful experience and one I remember fondly from my time in Ohio at National Grange. This new program would be very similar but at the State level. Applicants must be 16 years old by Jan 1 and may not turn 36 before the end of State Session. They will need to be a member in good standing of a local (Subordinate and/or Pomona Grange). The recommendation form must be submitted by the local Grange Master/ President, Youth Coordinator or Legislative Director and the interested youth member will complete a Google Application Form to apply. The deadline to apply for this program will be August 1 and winners will be announced at the next State Grange Session. Our second program is a Youth Officer Meet and Greet at State Session. This will give the youth officers an opportunity to ask for advice and receive encouragement from the current state officers. It will also allow the State Officers a chance to get to know the youth members who may be sitting in their seats some day.

Finally for our Older Youth members, we are working on creating a Young Adult Weekend. All attendees will need to be over 21 for legal purposes. Our idea is to rent out an Air B n B with enough space for about 8 - 10 couples. If we get enough interest, we could rent a few houses near each other. We have found a great location in Lititz, PA over President's Day weekend during the Fire and Ice Festival. Dates for the weekend are February 12 - 15, 2027. The food for the weekend will be prepared by members of the youth committee. There are many events in town during the festival and the shops in town have ice sculptures outside to pique your interest. Stay tuned for more information on this event. Please let me know if you would like to join us.

We hope your 2026 is off to a great start and we can't wait to see you at our events.

Youth



Co- Directors

Sarah & Raymond Barber

Happy New Year from the Youth Department! We are looking forward to an exciting year ahead. We started off 2026 with a Youth Weekend at Stanford Grange January 16 - 18. We had a great time with some leadership building workshops, community service and a square dance. Thank you to Stanford Grange for hosting us for such a wonderful weekend. Our next event is coming up March 27 - 29 at Walton Grange #1454 in Delaware County. Some highlights of the weekend will be public speaking and sign-

Support Grange Youth

Calendar Of Events

NEW YORK STATE GRANGE

2026

Calendar of Events, Activities, & Dues Dates

February 26 – 28	Central NY Farm Show – State Fair Grounds – Syracuse
March 13 – 15	Spring Youth Weekend – Walton Grange – Delaware County
March 15	Empire State Granger Copy Due
March 23	Executive Committee Meeting, 4 p.m. – Zoom
March 31	Subordinate Dues to State Secretary
March 31	Junior Grange Quarterly Report Due to State Secretary
April 1-30	GRANGE MONTH – Plan a special public activity/ event
April 15	Art/Photo Entries due at HDQ for Judging
April 15	Talent Entry Report Sheets due to the State Lecturer
April 17 – 19	Northeast Lecturer’s Conference – State Grange Headquarters – Cortland
April 20	Woodworking, Quilting, & Needlework due at HDQ for Judging
April 24	Executive Committee Meeting, 2:30 p.m. – Hybrid
April 25	Lecturer/FAC Conference – State Grange Headquarters – Cortland
April 26	State Dart Ball Tournament – State Grange Headquarters – 9 a.m.
May 14 – 16	NYS FFA Convention, Buffalo
May 15	Empire State Granger Copy Due
June 7	State Bowling Tournament – Cort-Lanes Bowling Alley, Cortland, 12 Noon
June 19	Executive Committee Meeting – Lux Hotel & Conference Center, Waterloo – 9:30 a.m.
June 30	Subordinate Dues to State Secretary
June 30	Junior Grange Quarterly Report Due to State Secretary
July 7	Executive Committee Meeting – Headquarters – Budget – 9:30 a.m.
July 12	State Golf Tournament – Vassar Golf Course – Poughkeepsie – 12 Noon
July 15	Empire State Granger Copy Due
July 27 – 31	Grange Camp “Kids Day Out Events;” 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Monday, July 27 – Brunswick Grange, Rensselaer County Tuesday, July 28 – Colonel Harper Grange, Delaware County Wednesday, July 29 – Wide Awake Grange, Ontario County Friday, July 31 – Kendrew Grange, St. Lawrence County
August 1	Cornhole Tournament – State Grange Headquarters – 9 a.m.
August 26 – Sept. 7	New York State Fair – Syracuse
September 1	National JG Report due
September 5	Grange Day at the New York State Fair – Syracuse
September 12	State Grange Health Fair – Headquarters – 9 a.m.
September 15	Empire State Granger Copy Due
September 15	Lecturer’s Reports due to State Lecturer
September 15	Community Service Yearbooks due to Director
September 18 – 20	Fall Youth Weekend – Jefferson County
Sept. 18 – Oct. 4	Eastern States Exposition (The Big E) – West Springfield, Massachusetts
September 25	Executive Committee Meeting – Headquarters – 3:30 p.m.
September 26	State Grange Legislative Day – Headquarters – 9 a.m.
September 27	Grange Day at the Big E – West Springfield, Massachusetts
September 30	Subordinate Dues to State Secretary
September 30	Junior Grange Quarterly Report to State Secretary
October 16 – 20	154 th Annual New York State Grange Session – Lux Hotel & Conference Center in Waterloo, Seneca County
October 20	New York State Grange Cultural & Educational Foundation Meeting – Lux Hotel & Conference Center in Waterloo – 9 a.m.
October 20	Executive Committee Meeting – Lux Hotel & Conference Center in Waterloo – 10 a.m.

November 15	Empire State Granger Copy Due
November 10 – 14	160 th Annual National Grange Session – Broken Arrow, Oklahoma
December	Executive Committee Meeting - TBA
December 31	Subordinate Dues to State Secretary
December 31	Junior Grange Quarterly Report & Dues due to State Secretary
As of 02/18/2026	

New Grange Members

Albany Co
Bethlehem #137
 Brett Axle
 Racheal Axle
 Samantha DiCicco
 William DiCicco
 Jennifer Moore
 Patrick Moore
 Laurie Schaible
 Barbara Viviano
Broome Co.
Susquehanna Valley #1552
 Lillian Dibble
Cortland Co.
Albright #440
 Derek Renninger
Cuyler #449
 Michael Larry
Columbia Co.
Copake #935
 Susan Arterian
 Terry Frey
 Dan Haas
 Lizanne Hart
 Matthew Kirsch
 Daniella Landau
 Eillene Leistner
 Wendy Lidell
 Craig Mende
 Sonia Pilcer
 Gina White
 Barry Winlker
Delaware Co.
Walton #1454
 Adrianna Ingle
 Michael Condon
 Isiah Dunkleman
 Albert Mason Jr.
 Dixie Manzer
 Sabastian Thompson
Colonel Harper #1508
 Donna VanSickle
 Thomas VanSickle
Dutchess Co.
Stanford #808
 Jacob Lyman
Oak Grove #873
 Lena Dickel
 Rick Dickel
Rhinebeck #896
 Ben Wheeler
 Rose Wheeler
 Rusty Wheeler
 Sarah Wheeler

Mount Hope #902
 Vrelin North
 Laura Pampalene
 Felicity Pitcher
 Barry Stith
 Dawn Stith
Stone Church #1561
 Ryan Ford
Essex Co.
Ausable Valley #973
 Liana Elopoulos
 Janne Lanzoni
 Dan Leary
 Brian Sech
 Jay Ward
 Theresa Winston
Fulton Co.
Perthshire #1445
 Richard Harnick
 Criag Jankens
Jefferson Co.
Champion #18
 Austin Laub
 Hailey MacCue
Kirkland #684
 Kathryn Handschuh
 Timothy Helmer
Orange Co.
Hamptonburgh #950
 Mary Climes
 Andrea Nilon
Otisville #1020
 Andrea Goldsmith
Otsego Co.
Pierstown #793
 Carey D’Avino
 Mary Lou D’Avino
 Carina Franck
 Pat Kennedy
 Maria Lazarich
 Jonathon Schau
Saratoga Co.
Milton #685
 Lewis Albers
 Carol Atwater
 Kenneth Badaszewski
Greenfield #807
 Shelly Emery
 Lorraine Fiorino
Ulster Co.
Plattekill #923
 Christopher Dawes
 Gregory Dawes
Wayne Co.
Eureka #46
 Raymond Freyn
 Aria Fuchs





Agriculture and Food

Dueling plans for more farmer aid

Ranking Democrat Angie Craig (MN) and several of her colleagues on the House Agriculture Committee plan to introduce sweeping legislation that would provide another \$17 billion in economic relief to financially strained farmers, delay cost changes in SNAP food aid, and end the administration's across-the-board tariffs. Meanwhile, Republican Senators John Boozman (AR), Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and John Hoeven (ND), Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, have been discussing a \$15 billion relief package with House Agriculture Committee Chairman Glenn "G.T." Thompson (R-PA). Their proposal would also raise USDA-backed farm operating and ownership loans. These proposals come as Congress is having difficulties completing the farm bill process after including the farm bill commodity and SNAP titles in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. Congress hasn't passed a comprehensive, five-year farm bill since 2018 amid partisan fighting.

President signs whole milk in schools bill

President Trump has signed the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act passed by Congress last month. The law will let schools serve flavored and unflavored reduced-fat and whole milk, and it overturns a 2010 law that mandated flavored milk be fat-free and traditional milk be 1% fat at most. This action has been a long-term priority for the National Grange.

Dietary Guidelines recommend "real food"

The new edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2025-2030, released in early January, recommends the return to more traditional foods and stresses that Americans should avoid "highly processed foods" and added sugars, especially sugar-sweetened beverages. The Guidelines recommend eating a variety of animal and plant proteins, including eggs, poultry, seafood, and red meat, as well as beans, peas, lentils, legumes, nuts, seeds, and soy. The first guidelines were published in 1980 and are a joint project of the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services.

Food for Peace headed to USDA

The Food for Peace foreign assistance program will be transferred from the State Department to the USDA by the Trump Administration. Congressional offices were notified of the change in mid-January, and interagency agreements have been signed. Food for Peace has been housed at the State Department since July, following the shuttering of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) amid allegations of inefficiencies.

USDA to set foreign land reporting standards

The Department of Agriculture is seeking public comment on ways to strengthen reporting of foreign ownership of agricultural land. Foreign acquisitions of agricultural land in the United States increased from about 600,000 acres per year (2013-2017) to 2.6 million acres per year (2017-2023). USDA's policy goal is to find the best way to get correct, comprehensive, verifiable descriptions or geo-spatial maps of the agricultural land held by foreign interests. A Government Accountability Office (GAO) report found that USDA staff failed to sufficiently verify the accuracy of foreign land ownership data and were slow to share the data with the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, which oversees foreign acquisitions of assets considered important to U.S. security.

Is Congress serious about immigration law reform?

Although immigration remains as politically polarizing as ever, several lawmakers from both parties say the moment may be right to reform laws governing foreign agricultural workers. Senator Amy Klobuchar. (D-MN), ranking Democrat on the Senate Agriculture Committee, says she recently met with several conservative members of the House and found common ground on the ag worker issue. House Agriculture Committee Chairman Glenn "G.T." Thompson (R-PA) has said the border had long been controlled by cartels, but is now under control by the United States, making a conversation about reform possible. Thompson hopes to

introduce an ag worker reform package in February. According to the Department of Homeland Security, border crossings were down 93% during the first year of the Trump administration's return to office. Passing a legal, workable,

Ag Workforce

common-sense pathway to secure an ag workforce for farmers and ranchers has been an annual priority for the Grange.

Health Care

Grange pushes for early cancer detection

The National Grange has been a long-time, strong supporter of congressional passage of the Multi-Cancer Early Detection Screening Coverage Act (MCED), including this year's bills H.R. 842 and S. 339. In late December, the Grange joined the nation's leading cancer advocate organizations in a display in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Washington Post* to urge Congress to finally pass MCED and authorize Medicare to cover this simple blood test that detects dozens of cancers. In mid-January, these supporters received word that the MCED provision had been included in negotiations for the January 30 government funding package proposal. National Grange President Christine Hamp followed up with personal emails to the top health care staff of both the Senate and House leadership, stressing that the grassroots rural and small-town membership of the National Grange urges Congressional leadership to keep MCED in the January 30 government funding package. Hamp further pointed out that for rural communities now without oncologists and cancer centers, early detection is not a convenience; it is a lifeline.

Telecommunications

Support for first responder network

National Grange President Christine Hamp has firsthand experience as a first responder firefighter. Drawing on that experience, she submitted a statement of support to a Senate hearing on the reauthorization of the federal public safety communications system, FirstNet. In her statement, she called the Senator's attention to her op-ed in the [Spokesman-Review](#), which gave a concrete example of FirstNet preventing a tragedy in a rural area. "When every second counts, there is no substitute," she said.

Transportation

Surface Transportation Board to eliminate barriers to rail service

The Surface Transportation Board has released a proposed rule to repeal regulatory restrictions on access to competitive freight rail service, including reciprocal switching. The proposal was greeted enthusiastically by shippers, who say that by eliminating outdated rules, the Board will carry out Congress's clear directive to allow reciprocal switching when needed to ensure freight rail competition. Reciprocal switching gives shippers who are captive to a single railroad access to a second carrier at a nearby interchange.

Freight rail merger filed

The Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern railroads have now formally submitted merger documents to the Surface Transportation Board. Such a merger would create the nation's first coast-to-coast freight rail company. Shippers are leery of the merger that would give a single railroad control of nearly half of all U.S. rail traffic. Agricultural organizations respond that farmers already operate on razor-thin margins and worry that consolidated railroads will adversely impact shippers and customers who depend upon rail service to move agricultural commodities, fertilizer, ag chemicals, fuel, and other essential supplies. The Surface Transportation Board unanimously rejected the initial merger application after finding the submission complete. The railroads are allowed to revise and resubmit their application.

Of Interest

Lawmakers to leave Congress

Over 50 Republican and Democratic members of the House of Representatives (30 Republicans and 23 Democrats), frustrated with a dysfunctional Congress, have announced they will head for the exits. Those leaving include conservatives, progressives, and moderates. This development scrambles the calculus on both sides of the aisle ahead of the midterm elections.

(Continued on page 8)

Grange Doings

Otsego County

Westville Grange #540

Westville Grange was pleased to present certificates to some long time members of the Grange. Dorothy Rathbun accepted an 80 year for her husband Les. Peter Rathbun received a 50 year (Gold Sheaf) certificate. Sammi Tabor was awarded a 55 year seal to insert into her Gold Sheaf certificate. The awards were presented by Susan Drake, past Lecturer of the New York State Grange.



Peter Rathbun



Dorothy Rathbun



Sammi Tabor

(Continued from page 7)National Grange News

2026 will recognize women farmers around the globe After years of discussion, it's finally official: 2026 is the **International Year of the Woman Farmer**. Everywhere you go this year, from farm groups, trade associations, state departments of agriculture, and Congress, you're likely to hear about recognition for women who lead from the farm to the agribusiness boardroom. A U.S.-sponsored resolution honoring female farmers was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly, with 123 countries cosponsoring. A handful of women farmers serving in Congress are expected to introduce a resolution in Congress soon. According to the USDA Census of Agriculture, 58% of all farms had at least one female producer.

Perspectives

"There is a fountain of youth: it is your mind, your talents, the creativity you bring to your life and the lives of the people you love. When you learn to tap this resource, you will have truly defeated age." ~ **Sophia Loren**

"The failure to invest in youth reflects a lack of compassion and a colossal failure of common sense." ~ **Coretta Scott King**

"Youth has no age." ~ **Pablo Picasso**

"Forty is the old age of youth. Fifty is the youth of old age." ~ **Victor Hugo**

"You are never too old to become young." ~ **Mae West**

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Sherri Horner

(Continued from page 3)New Officers and Deputies

visit other Granges, I feel like those people are my best friends. I enjoy the Grange. I do find it difficult to recruit new members. Most people I try to recruit feel the Grange is for farmers. I try to tell

them our other interests, but most just are not interested. I think they are missing a lot by not joining the Grange. I feel many Granges, including my Grange, just are not strong enough to fulfill many activities. I hope to remain a Special Deputy in the future.